(c) the steps being taken to increase the strength of Judges and to fill the vacancies; and

(d) by when these are likely to be filled?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) The pendency of cases as on 1st March, 2003 in the High Court of Madhya Pradesh including its benches is as given below:—

(i) In the main seat at Jabalpur	:	77,255
(ii) In the bench at Indore	:	37,279
(iii) In the bench at Gwalior	:	26,691
TOTAL		1,41,225

(b) Madhya Pradesh High Court has a strength of 24 permanent and 5 Additional Judges. All the Judges in the High Court are in position as on 31.3.03 and there is no vacancy. The deployment of Judges in the Benches is done by the Chief Justice of the High Court. As such, no data is maintained by the Central Government about the vacancies in the benches, including the Indore and Gwalior Benches.

(c) The Government reviews the Judges Strength of High Courts periodically every three years. The increase in the Judge Strength of a High Court is considered only when the average rate of disposal of main cases in the concerned High Court is above the national average.

(d) Does not arise.

Target for export of Tea

*351. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any plan has been chalked out to revive the tea industry;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any target for export of tea has been fixed; and

(d) if so, the efforts made to meet the target?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) and (b) Government is aware of the problems being faced by the Indian tea industry. Some of the major steps taken by the Government to revive the tea industry are given below:

- In the Union Budget for 2003-04, the excise duty of Re. 1/- per Kg on tea has been abolished and replaced by an additional duty of excise of Re. 1/- per Kg by way of surcharge for creating a separate fund for development, modernisation and rehabilitation of the tea plantation sector.
- Expert Committees have been appointed to make an in-depth study of the closed tea gardens in the States of West Bengal, Kerala, Assam and Tripura and suggest a package of measures for their viability and revival.
- A Study of the primary marketing system for tea was conducted through M/s. Ferguson. Based on their recommendations, the Tea Marketing (Control) Order, 2003 has been notified in supersession of the Tea Marketing (Control) Order, 1984. The auction rules have been changed to provide for a more transparent price discovery mechanism for tea under auction.
- RBI has announced a relief package which provides for restructuring/reschedulement of commercial bank loans outstanding in the tea sector and relief for small tea growers and Bought Leaf Factories. The tea industry is expected to derive significant benefit from this package.
- A Price Stabilisation Fund with an initial corpus of Rs. 500 crores has been established for providing relief to the small growers of plantation commodities such as tea, coffee, rubber and tobacco.
- The allowance under Section 33 AB of Income Tax Act has been increased from 20% to 40% in the Budget 2001-02 to encourage profit making units to invest in rejuvenation and replantation of tea bushes and also modernisation of machinery.

- Tea Board is implementing a number of developmental Schemes during the 10th Five Year Plan for enchancing productivity, quality and marketability of tea produced in the country.

- A factory upgradation scheme has been implemented by the Tea Board to encourage production of good quality orthodox and non-reconditioned Cut-Tear-Curl (CTC) teas in the country to cater to international demand.

- A Generic joint promotion campaign has been launched in collaboration with the Indian tea industry for promoting domestic consumption of tea.

(c) and (d) The export target for tea for the year 2002-03 was 200 million kgs valued at US$ 367 million (approximately Rs. 1800 crores). The specific steps outlined below have been initiated to increase exports.

- Tea Board is implementing a medium term export strategy on tea prepared in consultation with M/s Accenture. As part of the Medium Term Export Strategy, a communication campaign to promote Indian tea and the logo developed by Tea Board was launched in Russia in October, 2002.

- Financial incentives are provided to the exporters of tea for meeting part of cost of handling, packaging, transport/freight charges.

  Tea Board is implementing a Quality Upgradation Programme for improving quality of tea manufactured by small growers in the country.

- Promotional support is being given to Indian exporters in their promotion and marketing of Indian brands.

- Participation in international fairs and specialised exhibitions, field sampling at speciality stores and markets, Buyer Seller Meets, and exchange of tea delegations between India and tea importing countries.